

Wellness Points

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Focusing on Health and Vitality is Part of Health Care

Economic and scientific research indicates that health and related expenses have more to do with behavior than care. Lifestyle habits such as low activity, what you eat, tobacco, and how you respond to stress account for more than 60% of health costs. Many business leaders are finding that directing their focus on good health and wellness is far more valuable than a system that is only based on treating illness. The first step is for an employer to host screening and health risk assessments such as the **Fall Health Screening** and **Personal Wellness Profiles (PWP)**. These screenings allow employees to know key values that relate to good health and vitality. Like the gauges on your car's dashboard, knowing numbers allows you to make the little changes to help optimize performance, energy and longevity of your engine.

The 2009 **Fall Health Screening** will be available at 24 locations starting October 6 through December 4, 2009. To sign-up for a screening, a Boise School District employee may register online for the location and time of most convenience. The **PWP** questionnaire will be a paper/pencil version that takes about 15 minutes to complete. Request one from a school nurse, complete and bring it to your screening. After completing both the health screening and the **PWP**, you will receive an outline of your health status—what you need to work on and what is going well. All information is administered by St. Luke's and is kept strictly confidential and complies with HIPPA guidelines. The 2009 **Fall Health Screening** schedule with dates, times, and locations will be available early September. Look for further details soon!

WELLNESS ON THE WAY

I SAT to I MOVE District Wide Pedometer Challenge Kicks Off Monday, October 12, 2009

I SAT to I MOVE is an 8-week pedometer challenge for Boise School Employees. Schools assemble teams for a friendly competition for most daily average steps as a school. A school team must average a minimum of 10,000 steps/day, most days of the week for 8 weeks, to be eligible for **I SAT to I MOVE** prizes. This year, participants can report their steps online, which makes tracking individual and team progress easy. Tracking online allows participants to see how other schools are measuring up.

Prizes for the top three winning schools include Wellness Grants to be spent on wellness related item(s) proposed by **I SAT to I MOVE** participants. Other prizes include two drawings for a healthy lunch for staff whom had 20 or more participants complete the challenge. Sign-up information is coming soon!

CHOLESTEROL

Q. Is margarine better than butter?

A. Yes. Margarines that list vegetable oils as the first ingredient is a better option when trying to control cholesterol levels. Butter is high in saturated fat, which raises cholesterol more than anything else. Beware of margarines made with "hydrogenated" vegetable oils. These can be tricky, because the process of hydrogenation is taking a vegetable oil and making it into a solid, which is equal to a saturated fat.

Q. My last cholesterol screening was in a normal range, does that mean I don't have to worry about my cholesterol anymore?

A. No. Elevated cholesterol and heart disease are not cured, but controlled by diet, exercise and drug therapy. Ceasing treatment and healthy lifestyle changes often return cholesterol levels to levels prior to medical and lifestyle interventions. It is important to check cholesterol levels to determine if cholesterol is being well managed.

Q. Should children worry about their cholesterol?

A. Yes. Everyone older than the age of 2 should care about cholesterol to reduce the risk of developing heart disease. The National Heart Blood Lung Institute (NHLBI) recommends that a child, whose father has been diagnosed with heart disease younger than the age of 55 or mother younger than 65, should be screened for elevated cholesterol. A child should also be tested if a parent has blood cholesterol higher than 240 mg/dL. Talk with your family physician about any concerns or questions you may have about your children's health.

A \$ SENSIBLE HEALTH BENEFIT

Make the On-site Blood Screening Your Lab Location for Your Doctor Ordered Blood Work

The 2009 **Fall Health Screening** and **Personal Wellness Profiles (PWP)** check for elevated blood lipids, blood sugar, hypertension and more. The lab tests available are at a negotiated rate given to the District.

For example, the **Fall Health Screening** allows employees to have a full lipid panel, a complete metabolic panel, and a glucose screening for a co-pay of \$5. The fees for these test cost the plan \$30.

Similar labs ordered outside of the screening cost approximately \$100, plus additional fees for the draw. Additional tests with a doctor's order can be done at the screenings also at a negotiated rate.

Most of these fees can be charged back to the \$500 wellness benefit if dollars are still available. Because of the negotiated rates, it helps save your wellness dollars and also saves the plan money.

The 2009 **Fall Health Screening** and **Personal Wellness Profiles (PWP)** schedule with dates, times, and locations will be available early September. Look for further details soon!

Health Challenges for September/October

- Request a **Fruit and Veggie Bingo** kit.
- Sign-up for the 2009 **Fall Health Screening** and complete the **Personal Wellness Profile (PWP)**.
- Find out how to get **HIP** at your school. **Health Improvement Presentations** are one-hour health presentations designed for teachers and staff of the Boise School District.

September - National Cholesterol Education Month The 411 on Total Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance which is made in your body. Cholesterol is found in foods that contain or come from animal sources. Your body needs some cholesterol to function properly, and in most cases all the cholesterol you need is produced by the liver in your body. For cardiovascular health, it is important to maintain a healthy cholesterol level. Eating too much saturated fat and cholesterol raises the level of cholesterol in your blood, which can build up in the walls of arteries. This build up, called plaque, can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke. There are no signs or symptoms of elevated blood cholesterol. The first step is to know where you are at and where you should be as noted below.

Total Cholesterol Level	Category
Less than 200 mg/dL	Desirable
200-239 mg/dL	Borderline High
240 mg/dL and above	High

Many people are able to lower their cholesterol levels by eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in cholesterol and saturated fats. Regular exercise and aiming for a healthy body weight are also advised. For information on cholesterol and numbers you need to know for good health, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

CHECK POINTS FOR HEALTHY LIVING

Nutrition

The Reality Dose on Caffeine - How Much is Too Much?

Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, some nuts and certain medicines. It has many effects on the body's metabolism, including stimulating the central nervous system. For most people, the amount of caffeine in two to four cups of coffee a day is not harmful. However, too much caffeine can make you restless, anxious and irritable. It may also keep you from sleeping well and cause headaches, abnormal heart rhythms and/or digestive discomfort. If you stop using caffeine, you could get withdrawal symptoms often experienced as headaches.

Some people are more sensitive to the effects of caffeine than others and should limit their use. Certain drugs and supplements may interact with caffeine. If you have questions about whether caffeine is safe for you, talk with your health care provider.

Product	Caffeine (mg)
Plain brewed coffee (8 oz)	95
Decaffeinated coffee (8 oz)	2
Starbucks® Latte (16 oz)	150
Starbucks® Coffee Grande (16 oz)	330
Black or green tea (8 oz)	30-50
Colas	20-50
Red Bull® (8.3 oz)	76
Extra-strength Excedrin® (2 tabs)	130
Hershey's® chocolate bar (1.55 oz)	9

Fitness

What Happens If I Stop Exercising?

A regular workout such as walking, biking, and running, which also includes muscle conditioning, is an important part of a regular exerciser's day. However, what physiologically happens when workouts get disrupted by work and busy schedules? According to exercise physiologists, the following occurs if you remove the stimulus of exercise from the body.

How does the heart respond when you stop your aerobic exercise?

- Resting heart rate and blood pressure begin to rise within a few days.
- Blood fat levels that are generally decreased with aerobic exercise begin to rise in as little as 2 days with no exercise.
- Within 2-3 weeks, much of the aerobic training effect can be lost and can take 6 weeks to regain.
- The decline depends on how long you have been exercising and is slower in people who have been exercising for years.

How do the muscles respond with no strength training?

- Within 1-2 weeks muscle strength declines, and muscles begin to get smaller (atrophy).
- Physical work becomes more challenging.
- Between 4-12 weeks, your strength returns to pre-training levels.
- If you continue to eat as you did when training, the body starts storing fat. As muscle decreases, fat will increase, so body weight does not change at first. After a few weeks, gains can be seen as much as one pound of fat per month, unless calorie consumption decreases.

Exercise also improves brain chemistry which leads to improved mood and overall feeling of wellbeing. Often irritability occurs when one stops exercising. If you have a disruption in your exercise program, try downsizing your physical activity rather than not exercising at all. If you normally jog 5 days a week, aim for 2-3 days a week. If you strength train 3-4 times per week, aim for a minimum of once a week. If you exercise for 30 minutes at a time, try exercising in bouts of 10 minute mini-sessions.

Keeping an exercise log with clear goals helps you stay on track. During busy times like the beginning of a new school year, focus on downsizing your exercise routine versus eliminating it all together.

Reference: Nutrition and Fitness. *Health News*. August 2005.



This newsletter was produced by the District's Employee Wellness Program.

Stress

Caring for Aging Parents

Many adult children go from caring for their own children to caring for parents. These adults find themselves suddenly looking for answers and options when it comes to caring for their parents. The AARP advises to start with some basic steps in providing support and care for an aging parent.

- Begin with honest and open communication. Keep the elder involved as much as possible. Be an advocate for parents and make desires, needs and concerns a priority when it comes to support and care for parents.
- To assist them in managing their personal matters, help them organize a file that keeps their health history, doctors, medications, spiritual needs, home maintenance and other vital information at their fingertips.
- For additional support in assisting an aging parent get the needed care, contact a geriatric care manager. They help families and elders navigate the resources available to them that can assist them with key decisions. You can find a professional, local geriatric care manager by visiting www.caremanager.org.

Please note, if you are experiencing stress and need assistance, contact the **Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** at **367.3300**.

Wellness Opportunities for District Employees

Fruit and Veggie Bingo is a flexible, nutrition enhancement program which promotes the consumption of fruits and veggies. Teachers can request materials to implement as an employee health activity; it makes a great classroom activity. If you would like your copy of the **Fruit and Veggie Bingo** kit, contact the Employee Wellness Coordinator at 854.4083.